

Yellow Fever Fact Sheet

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department | Emergency Preparedness



What is yellow fever?

Yellow fever virus is found in tropical and subtropical areas in South America and Africa. The virus is transmitted to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Yellow fever is a very rare cause of illness in U.S. travelers. Illness ranges in severity from a self-limited febrile illness to severe liver disease with bleeding. Yellow fever is an RNA virus that belongs to the genus *Flavivirus*. It is related to West Nile, St. Louis encephalitis, and Japanese encephalitis viruses.

How is yellow fever transmitted?

Yellow fever virus is transmitted to people through the bite of infected *Aedes* or *Haemagogus* species mosquitoes. Mosquitos' acquire the virus by feeding on infected primates (human or non-human) and then can transmit the virus to other primates (human or non-human). People infected with yellow fever virus are infectious to mosquitoes shortly before the onset of fever and up to 5 days after onset.

Yellow fever has three transmission cycles:

Jungle (sylvatic) cycle: This involves transmission of the virus between non-human primates (e.g. monkeys) and mosquito species found in the forest canopy. The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes from monkeys to humans when humans are visiting or working in the jungle.

Intermediate (savannah) cycle: This cycle involves transmission of virus from mosquitoes to humans living or working in jungle border areas. In this cycle, the virus can be transmitted from monkey to human or from human to human via mosquito.

Urban cycle: This cycle involves transmission of the virus between humans and urban mosquitoes, primarily *Aedes aegypti*. The virus is usually brought to the urban setting by a human who was infected in the jungle or savannah.

What are the symptoms of yellow fever?

The majority of persons infected with yellow fever virus have no illness or only mild illness. In people who develop symptoms, the incubation period is typically 3-6 days. The initial symptoms include a sudden onset of fever, chills, severe headache, back pain, general body aches, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and weakness. Most people improve after the initial presentation. After a brief remission of hours to a day, roughly 15% of cases progress to develop a more severe form of the disease. The severe form is characterized by high fever, jaundice, bleeding, and eventually shock and multi-organ failure.



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How is yellow fever diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually based on blood tests that look for virus or antibodies that a person's immune-system makes against the viral infection.

What is the treatment for yellow fever?

No specific treatments have been found to benefit patients with yellow fever. Whenever possible, yellow fever patients should be hospitalized for supportive care



and close observation. The treatment is symptomatic and patients should rest and be given fluids, pain relievers and medication to reduce fever and relieve symptoms of aching and fever. Yellow fever patients should be protected from further mosquito exposure (staying indoors and/or under a mosquito net) for up to 5 days after the onset of fever. This way, the yellow fever virus in their bloodstream will be unavailable to uninfected mosquitoes. This breaks the transmission cycle and reduces the risk to the people around them.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/index.html>

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is committed to providing relevant and timely information during a public health emergency.

For the latest information, please visit:
www.lucascountyhealth.com



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